

Serial No.: 10/532,598
Atty. Docket No.: P70481US0

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed concurrently with an RCE.

The Office Action mailed September 4, 2008, has been carefully reviewed and, to facilitate prosecution, Applicants requested a personal interview which was conducted by Examiner Holloway and his supervisor, SPE Lucchesi, on January 29, 2009. Applicants were represented by Suzin Bailey. Applicants sincerely thank both Examiners for their time and cordiality in conducting the interview.

During the interview, the prior art patents to Brown et al. ("Brown") (U.S. Patent No. 4,701,159) and Shoor (U.S. Patent No. 4,256,106) were discussed, and Applicants' representative presented a product sample having a coupling device in accordance with the claimed invention. The structural features of the coupling device and particularly of the releasable locking member were demonstrated in conjunction with a proposed amendment to claim 19 to clarify that the releasable locking member rotates about *the first connector part itself*, and not just about the longitudinal axis thereof.

Now responding to the Office Action mailed September 4, 2008, by this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 19 and 30. Claims 19-38 are pending in the application. Claims 19 and 30 are independent.

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The Examiner rejected claims 19-38 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of Shoor.

As clarified in amended claims 19 and 30, the present invention is directed to a coupling device having a first connector part and a second connector part, with each connector part including at least one connecting portion configured to engage with at least one corresponding connecting portion of the other connector part. When so engaged, the first and second connector parts are coupled to be in substantially linear alignment with one another.

The coupling device further includes a releasable locking member that is configured to both lock the coupling between the first and second connector parts and to assist in disengaging the engagement between the connecting portions. This releasable locking member, which has a first engagement structure, is secured to the first connector part in a fixed longitudinal position while being rotatably movable *about the first connector part*. As discussed during the interview, the releasable locking member being rotatably movable around the first connector part as claimed is not shown in the prior art.

Brown discloses a catheter set having a multilumen locking connector composed of a female lock adapter 40 and a male lock adapter 62 that, when engaged, are locked together by a locking ring

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64. The locking ring 64 is not, however, secured to the male adapter in a fixed longitudinal position but instead *is free to move axially* along the adapter 110 (see Figure 6). Furthermore, as acknowledged by the Examiner, Brown does not disclose a releasable locking member configured to assist in disengaging the engagement between the connectors, i.e., the male and female lock adapters.

Shoor discloses a resealable device including connectors 10 and 11 that are connected by a bayonet-lock type connection including ridges or pins 15 on connector 10 that are received in corresponding grooves 16 in connector 11 (see column 3, lines 36-40). The Examiner stated that the pins 15 constitute a releasable locking member and that this releasable locking member, *the pins 15*, has a first engagement structure in the form of the groove 16. However, this does not correspond with the present invention since, as claimed, the first engagement structure is defined as being *part of* the releasable locking member. If the pins are interpreted as the locking member, it is clear that the groove 16 of Shoor is not part of the pins, or even of the first connector 10 of which the pins are a part. On the contrary, the groove 16 is part of the second connector 11.

Further, according to the presently claimed invention, the first engagement structure of the releasable locking member is

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configured to engage with a second engagement structure on the second connector part *when the releasable locking member is rotated relative to the second connector part.* When so rotated, the engagement structures on the locking member and second connector part act to "lock" the connection between the first and second connector parts to prevent them from being axially pulled apart in an absence of respective counter-rotational movement of the locking member and second connector parts.

In Shoor, relative rotational movement of the first connector 10 with the second connector 11 is not disclosed as necessary or even desirable. Rather, the connectors 10 and 11 are locked together through axial movement only. Nor is there any reason for or disclosure of rotational movement of the stretching assembly, 41, 44, 48 of Shoor relative to the second connector 11, and certainly none that serves to lock the first connector 10 to the second connector 11 to prevent their separation in the absence of counter-rotational movement, as claimed for the locking member of the present invention. Finally, the components of the stretching assembly portion are not disclosed as being relatively rotatable. On the contrary, Shoor states that the tubing 44 is bonded to the enlarged portion 43 of the internal passage 42 of plunger 41 (see column 4, lines 35-54), and there is nothing to suggest from either

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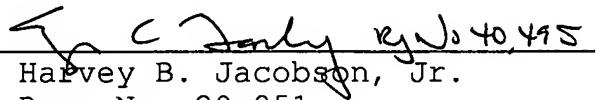
the disclosure or Figure 1A of Shoor that the enlarged portion 48 is not similarly bonded to the plunger 41.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 19 and 30 are patentable over the prior art. Favorable reconsideration and allowance thereof is requested. Claims 20-29 and 31-38 are in condition for allowance as claims properly dependent on an allowable base claim and for the subject matter contained therein. Favorable consideration and allowance thereof is therefore requested.

With this amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the present application can receive an early Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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